

Central Falls School District

Board of Trustees

Minutes

6:00 PM

September 16, 2008

I. Call to Order:

Vice Chairwoman, Mrs. Sonia Rodrigues called the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Present were: Ms. Sonia Rodrigues, Vice Chairwoman

Ms. Mary Lou Perez

Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado

Mr. Vladimir Ibarra

Ms. Leslie Estrada (6:32 PM)

Not present: Ms. Ana Cano-Morales, Chairwoman

Mr. David Cruise

II. Recognition

Jane Bernadino, Central Falls High School Teacher/Department Chair was recognized for being named the RI Lodging Management

Program Teacher of the Year by the American Hotel and Lodging Association Educational Institute.

The Tall University film presentation was given by Ms. Elizabeth Keiser. Ms. Keiser spoke briefly about how the program enhances student learning. The two films that were shown were Romeo & Juliet performed by Central Falls High School students and a film with several elementary students illustrating the practical uses of the program and techniques in the classroom.

IV. Policy and Planning:

A. High School Update

Principal Dr. Mario Andrade and Assistant Principal Andrew Benn gave an update on the school's full NEASC accreditation, the preliminary approval of the high school diploma system, the summer work with teachers regarding 9th and 10th grade teams and the academies, the improvement in school climate, the reduction of suspensions and the high student attendance.

Ms. Rodrigues had a question about the media coverage and emails circulating in regards to the new graduation requirements and the weight of the NECAP test scores and how that was affecting the students at the high school.

Dr. Andrade answered by speaking of setting goals for all students as well as expectations and focusing on the results.

Ms. Rodrigues asked how Dr. Andrade planned on checking the student perspective about how the school was progressing.

Dr. Andrade replied that they plan on surveying students.

Dr. Gallo spoke about a Brown University intern that would be conducting research and focus groups with the students and teachers, which would allow for a full perspective on the opinions and attitudes of the students. She indicated that the 90% attendance rate among 9th and 10th graders is one clear indication that things were changing.

Action: None

B. Human Resources Commitment Policy

Dr. Gallo explained that the commitment pledge is a document that new teachers are asked to sign in true care of professionalism and what it is that the district is reflecting and is about. She stated that the Commissioner had set forth a specific pledge for high school teachers last year. She stated that as a system they wanted to embrace a similar document for PK-12. Dr. Gallo stated that the teaching practice pledge has been well received by teachers. Dr. Gallo asked the board to approve and sign it into policy.

Ms. Rodrigues had a comment and recommendation on one of the

bullet items in the document that referred to students who are at risk of falling behind. She suggested that the language be modified to also include vigilance for children who are doing well but need more of a challenge and those that could be moving forward faster.

Dr. Gallo stated that the first focus is to get out of corrective action. She stated that all students will begin to excel when the early gap in reading and numeracy are closed. She referred to a summer program at Calcutt that Principal Elizabeth Legault put in place to draw out students who were typically labeled troublesome but had the potential to do much better. Dr. Gallo stated that the district is in conversations with Wheeler School in terms of adjusting the curriculum and instruction to teach to the very top of the class. She stated that the high school has honor classes and early enrollment programs.

Dr. Gallo asked Ms. Rodrigues if the language should be added immediately or at a later time. Ms. Rodrigues stated that the language could be added at a later time.

Action: Reviewed and revisions recommended

V. Consent Agenda:

Ms. Rodrigues asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Ms. Perez made the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Estrada.

Dr. Gallo made a formal withdrawal from the consent agenda and stated, “I would like to go on record stating that the Central Falls Teachers Union has objected to the creation of the Academy Leader and 9th and 10th Grade Team Leader positions. These positions are urgent and important to the ongoing design transition of our high school into the upper and lower houses with teaming ongoing with the lower house and the four academies in the upper house. Furthermore we were specifically charged by the Commissioner to move in this direction for September of 2009. However, according to the contract since the Central Falls Teacher Union has objected, we may not fill these positions at this time. Jane and I do plan to meet tomorrow and hopefully will reconcile our differences and carry on with the appointments immediately thereafter. If we reconcile, we should be able to appoint at our next Board meeting with all benefits retroactively applied because the work of the positions have been assumed by our appointees as part of their professional obligations as recognized leaders at our high school.”

Consent item was withdrawn from the vote.

Ms. Rosado abstained from the vote. The consent agenda was approved by the Board 4-0.

VI. Superintendent's Report:

Woods/Johnson Grant has been awarded in the amount of \$1.5 million that will be shared with the Central Falls, Pawtucket and Providence Middle Schools and will be partnering with Sojourner House and Youth Voices in creating a virtual Dating Violence Prevention program.

The district has had an increase in registration with 115 new Kindergarten students and opened three new Kindergarten classes since August. There are 330 new registrants in Grades 1-12 only 20 of which were re-registrations. Enrollment is holding at 3,400 children; all residents of Central Falls. Attendance Officer Larry DeCoste checks residency and making sure that our students are truly living in Central Falls on an ongoing base.

The Vaccinate Before You Graduate is an ongoing program in Central Falls and the district was informed that it was being taken advantage of and that 100% of the students are getting vaccinated.

Seventeen Central Falls high school students and four staff members will travel to New York City to the United Nations for the International Peace Conference as invited guests. They will carry the flags during the ceremony and possibly perform.

VII. Public Comment:

A parent spoke of worries about her son's transition into high school. She stated that she spoke with Dr. Gallo before he started school because she was worried about the change because he is in special education. She stated that he is doing very well and taking history in a regular class. He is enjoying his high school experience and the way that he is being taught.

VIII. Next Board Meeting:

Next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 14, 2008.

IX. School Board Comment/Communication:

None

XI. Executive Session and Adjournment of public session:

Executive Session was held.